

No Swimming

Jack Campbell

"Lake Haussmann" is a nickname for the Drainage Retention Basin located in the northwest quadrant of the Laboratory. Campbell discovers that you don't mess with the Lab when it comes to environmental protection.

I came over to the Laser Program in 1980, and one of the projects that I worked in was the Beamlet project that started in 1990 and ended in October 1994. We were on a very tight schedule. I promised the team that if they would complete the project on time, I would swim across Lake Haussmann, which is the pond by the Central Cafeteria.

Now, I don't think anyone had ever swum across it up to that point. Sure enough, this caused a lot of enthusiasm, so we did actually meet the schedule. Soon afterward, the group reminded me that I needed to swim across the pond.

So one warm September afternoon, shortly after we reached this milestone—in fact, within about 12 hours after we reached the milestone—I swam across Lake Haussmann.

Unfortunately, *Newsline's* photographers took a picture of me. I don't think the Lab Director was terribly amused by the fact that I had swum across the pond, because you really weren't supposed to do that.

I received a letter from the head of the Environmental Protection Department chastising me for swimming across the pond, saying that they were going to put up No Swimming signs around it. I wrote back a note that said I knew I wasn't supposed to be swimming across the pond, but I wondered if they would have a problem if, after the next milestone, we could skydive at the site. The response I received said that it didn't seem like that would affect the air quality, so it was probably okay.

Jack Campbell on his legendary crossing of Lake Haussmann.

Watch Where You're Going

Karen Feifarek

When I was a Protective Services officer, I used to work a post just before dawn. There had been some construction down the street where they were working on pipes underground, and they had dug a big pit about 5- to 6-feet deep. They had put up sawhorses with flashing lights and taped off the area. One morning, while it was still dark, I watched a man walk down the street toward the hole; it was pretty apparent that he was lost in thought. He got up to the hole, which was well lit by the flashing lights on the sawhorses. Now, all he had to do was walk around the hole into the street and go on his merry way. But for some unknown reason, he lifted up the tape, walked in and fell right into that hole. I called the Fire Department and Maintenance, who then came and pulled him out.

After they rescued him, the Fire Department and Maintenance groups stood there and argued about what to do with the hole. The Fire Department argued with Maintenance, saying that they had to cover that pit: sawhorses, flashing lights, and tape obviously weren't enough. Maintenance disagreed, saying "it's enough, it's enough!" While they were standing there arguing about it, another man lost in thought came walking down the sidewalk, lifted up the tape, and fell into the pit.



“Sometimes success in life happens by seizing a moment, in the absence of detailed plans. Spontaneity is a huge part of life—and in a sense, is a characteristic of the Lab.”

Bill Lokke

A Lutetium Mother Lode

Dick Hatfield

When I received my Q clearance in 1965, I was assigned to an office in a trailer outside what is now Building 131. My gunmetal gray desk was made out of typical government steel, a hand-me-down from someone who had moved on to other things. I started rummaging through the desk and found a chunk (maybe a few hundred grams) of a dark, metallic material. Scratched on its surface was the word “lutetium.” I dug out my 1950 *Handbook of Chemistry and Physics* and found that lutetium was element number 71 and was a rare Earth element. My handbook further stated that lutetium “had little practical use.” I turned the material over to the radiochemistry department, which seemed to have a use for it. I suspect that the chunk in my desk may have been a significant fraction of the world’s supply of this element. Now, where else except for the Rad Lab would one find an item such as this?

Cooling Your Heels

You were hired to do classified work, yet you do not have Q clearance. Stay home and relax until it comes through? Not a chance. The Laboratory had just the place for you. Often a ready-for-the-garbage-heap trailer, “the cooler” was a place for new employees to perform unclassified work while waiting for the authorities to properly investigate their background. Many people have fond memories of their coolers, as evidenced below when Trailer 2776 was demolished.

The person who manages the trailer and provides clerical support to those waiting for their “green badges” is often called upon to give moral support, too. Dorothy Freeman says, “I used to call myself ‘Mother Confessor’ when I was managing the cooler. In those days, it was taking a very long time to get a clearance—sometimes up to 2 years. After several months of

waiting, people would start to get very, very anxious. Sooner or later, each one would knock on my door and come in and say, ‘Dorothy, can I talk to you?’ Then I knew it was ‘True Confessions’ time!”

Gerri Braswell, cooler manager for the Computation and Defense and Nuclear Technologies directorates, agrees. “They come in, looking very serious, and they’ll say something like, ‘I just know that I won’t get a badge because when I was a teenager I stole a hubcap.’ And I just want to burst out laughing.

“But I’m guilty of the same thinking,” she continues. “If my clearance renewal is taking a while to go through, I’ll start thinking, ‘I know I haven’t done anything, so how come it’s taking so long?’ That’s when I have to look at myself and say, ‘Gerri, practice what you preach!’”



1996 R.I.P. party for Trailer 2776, cooler and friend to many in the Technical Information Department.